4:Phillips E-4,5 (1956-1957) 1966
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152 571 ritualized, ways of expressing hostility. What is significant about these particular procedures is that their very formalism serves to keep the aggression controlled and within bounds. Thus, everybody knows precisely how to behave when a buffalo disappears in the middle of the night and an intermediary arrives the next day to arrange the price for its return. Similarly, the aggressor, his victim, and everyone else present knows what is meant when someone calls a dog by the name of a person who is within hearing range and claims it was simply a slip of the tongue. The victim might respond by stealing his antagonist's boat and returning it a few weeks later, after his adversary has suffered sufficient anxiety. Note that in all these cases a face-to-face confrontation is either avoided or concealed.

152 571 754 Related to the above is the use of magical aggression. Textor (1960) points out that magical aggression—from one *person* to another *person*—is on the wane in Bang Chan. Also, it is clear from his exhaustive inventory of the magical practices in the village that interpersonal aggression has a very minor part in what is otherwise an extremely elaborate belief and ritual system: there are no more than three or four supernatural "objects," out of more than one hundred and seventy, that even suggest witchcraft, and although these objects are considered highly potent, they are rarely used. Even in the most extreme case—a young man using the oil from the chin of a corpse to induce hysteria in a maiden who has rebuffed his advances[9]—the victim is held partially responsible for having succumbed to the magic, a consideration that diminishes the "magical" implications of the ritual.[10]

152 762 Finally, a word should be said about the most convoluted way of expressing aggression. This is suicide, a procedure which, obviously, is applicable to only a small number of people. Nevertheless, during the relatively brief period that I was in the field, three Bang Chaners (out of a population of 1,771) attempted to do away with themselves by hanging. They always selected a conspicuous place (a tree on the Minburi highway or over the main canal) and were always unsuccessful. The aggression here is convoluted not only because it is turned inward, but also because it is

[9] This blending of sex and aggression does not have the same meaning in Bang Chan as it has in the West. Although the young man is concerned with punishing the girl for not responding to him, he is more concerned with breaking down her defenses and equilibrium, the very factors which denied him access. In English terminology, he wants to "unhinge" her, with all the duality that such symbolism might imply.

[10] While magical aggression between people is relatively minor, magical means of averting aggression by non-human forces is not. In fact, the largest number of magical practices in Bang Chan relate to protecting the health and welfare of the organism from malevolent spirits, accidents, and dangerous animals. These data, of course, are quite consistent with the SCT data on "anxiety," presented in the preceding section.

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intended to hurt others. The explicit justification in all three suicide attempts was to make a spouse feel "sorry and unhappy." [152] [762]

What is perhaps most intriguing about all these naturalistic ways of expressing aggression (even the last, which, despite its drama, is attempted, not actual, suicide) is that in their formalism and indirection they are actually quite flaccid. An obvious question, therefore, is whether the villagers' aggressive tendencies are, at bottom, quite weak, or whether they are simply bottled up, never to emerge in any but controlled and disguised ways. The answer to this question seems to be "both," depending upon one's analytic perspective. On the one hand, the villagers are so attentive in their relationships to shutting off aggression before it gets up a head of steam, that these relationships provide little basis—in an objective, realistic sense—for the development of aggressive feelings. When a potentially hostile act does not even take place, there is simply no reason to feel angry, other than perhaps to be angered because one's anticipations have been frustrated. However, the likelihood that overt hostility will be suppressed is itself so expectable that such secondary anger, if present, is minimal. Further, the villagers' self-concern is so great that they simply do not have that much to gain, psycho-dynamically, from being intensely angry at others. An act of interpersonal aggression assumes emotional investment in others (or obversely, that others provide the self with major emotional satisfaction). If such investment is hesitant, guarded, or otherwise weakened—as almost all of our materials have indicated—the aggression that normally accompanies that investment, or is allowed by it, will also be weakened. Simply stated: it is difficult for a person to be angry at people with whom he does not have much of an emotional relationship. [156]*

On the other hand, the great attention that villagers give to the control of aggression indicates that they are by no means at peace with these feelings. In fact, what is most impressive about aggression in Bang Chan is not its absence, but the amount and kinds of control that are exercised over it. This very process of control probably intensifies whatever "realistically derived" aggressive feelings they already harbor. Thus, although their overt social behavior does not provide a basis for the development of aggressive feelings, their covert behavior—vis-à-vis themselves—certainly does. [156]*

The fundamental issue, of course, is why villagers should be so concerned with controlling their aggressions in the first instance. This is not an easy question to answer. However, there are at least three considerations which, if taken together, might account for it. First, much of their aggression control might derive from the more generalized fear of losing equilibrium—of "falling apart" or becoming psychically disassembled; of